*The Great Gatsby*: Material Fantasies and Skewed Perceptions

1. **Intro**
   1. **Attention Grabber:** (set historical context with image opening): Trumpets blared boisterously, people celebrated carelessly, and money flowed freely at the time in which F. Scott Fitzgerald composed *The Great Gatsby*. The 1920s came with great economic prosperity, which lead to many people leading luxurious and careless lives. In turn, many Americans began to emphasize the importance of wealth, material possessions and social standings.
   2. **Thesis:** *The Great Gatsby* suggests that one’s fixation with material wealth leads to the inability to discern between genuine emotions and pure emotionless desire, which in turn causes one to lose the ability to perceive what is real.
2. **Body Section #1:**
   1. **Topic/Claim:** Symbols appear throughout the novel to suggest that Gatsby has intertwined his separate dreams of Daisy and of wealth into a single dream.
   2. **Evidence:** Fitzgerald conjures the image of stairs throughout *The Great Gatsby* as one of these symbols. As Gatsby remembers one of his early encounters with Daisy he recalls that, “out of the corner of his eye [he] saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder” (117).
   3. **Analysis:** In this instance, Gatsby associates Daisy and her social standing with his dream of obtaining more wealth and climbing the social ladder to a higher position. He creates the image of feeding in this scene, suggesting that his fantasies have become a form of necessary sustenance for him. (Analysis continues: content should generally be *more* analysis than evidence
   4. **Continue claim/evidence/analysis as needed to support section’s topic**
3. **Body Section #2**
   1. **Topic/Claim:** Not only does Fitzgerald’s novel suggest that a focus on material dreams leads to misinterpretation of one’s feelings, but it also implies that material dreams are not truly worth the value that society places on them. Nick discredits the legitimacy of material dreams and shows Gatsby’s extreme unawareness of his present life by juxtaposing the past and the present.
   2. **Evidence:** Nick reflects upon the reactions of the sailors who discovered America and thinks that the sailors were “face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. And as I sat there, brooding on the old unknown world, I thought of Gatsby’s wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock” (189).
   3. **Analysis:** Nick, by claiming that the discovery of the new continent was the last time in history worthy of immense wonder, suggests that the material dreams and social aspirations are not deserving of the amount of value that Gatsby assigns to them. (analysis continues)

**\*Note: Continue repeating this structure for as many topics/evidence as you need to support your thesis, then transition to your Conclusion.**

**IV. Conclusion**

1. **Rephrase thesis:** Throughout *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator implies that by focusing on the achievement of material goals, one can no longer distinguish between emotions and greedy desire, therefore confusing dreams and reality.
2. **Closing Thought/Universal Application/ The Big “So What?”:**

For Gatsby, the failure of his dreams to come true in the end leads to his disillusionment. Perhaps the flashy show of the 1920s put on a wonderful jazz and flapper-packed act that enchanted some, but *The Great Gatsby* warns that consequences come with a careless and wealth-obsessed lifestyle. One must forfeit the pleasures of true emotions and risk gaining a skewed perception of reality in order to pursue material success.